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INTELLIGENCE IN RECENT PUBLIC LITERATURE

CONFLICT IN THE SHADOWS. By *James Eliot Cross*. With foreword by Stewart Alsop. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday. 1963. Pp. 172. \$3.95.)

Subtitled "The Nature and Politics of Guerrilla War," our ex-colleague's book is a remarkably fine, panoramic examination of insurgency and counterinsurgency. It belongs in the first rank of general works on that intensely topical theme, alongside Paret and Shy, *Guerrillas in the 1960's* (second edition) and Heilbrunn, *Partisan Warfare*, both published last year. Moreover, Cross writes well: reading him is no chore.

Making liberal use of historical and current illustrations, the book describes the kinds of environments and the synoptic conditions in which insurrection may take root and flourish, the character of the military conflict between guerrilla and government forces, the critical struggle between the two for popular support, and the roles, problems, and ramifying burdens of foreign powers involved on either side.

The "guerrilla epidemic" of the current nuclear epoch is diagnosed as deriving largely from the Communist movement's need for a feasible mode of expansion. After early postwar hopes placed on political action and national elections had proved illusory and conventional war became a potential prelude to holocaust, subversive insurgency or war-by-proxy remained as a reasonably safe means for extending the Communist domain. With a second from Alsop, the author takes Khrushchev's January 1961 declaration of support for "wars of national liberation" as a disclosure of the policy Communism had followed and would continue to follow, and he shows how the immature or backward states are particularly attractive targets for this policy. He concludes, however, that, given American understanding of the nature of insurrectionary warfare and effective use of U.S. assets, there is good reason to believe that over the next decade the Communist strategy can be defeated. We will be able, he argues, to work in harmony with the governments of states under attack and to bring more Western nations "into what must finally be a wide cooperative effort."

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Recent Book

The author's passages on the intelligence function in guerrilla warfare are rather disappointing. One had hoped, taking account of his OSS-CIA experience as well as his impressive research, for more than he gives in that area. He writes expertly and at some length on tactics, targets, weaponry, logistics, and communications. His evaluation of the non-combatant and of the influences which move him one way or the other is refined. But on intelligence he is distressingly content with the axiomatic or the superficial.

To be sure, he emphasizes the importance of intelligence for both guerrilla and counterguerrilla operations and adds that "first-rate counterespionage or counterintelligence is critical" for both sides. He goes on:

In guerrilla war the military aspects of intelligence boil down to a few crucial questions for each side. The guerrillas, who can not fight except on their own terms, must know enough of their enemy's plans and movements to avoid being trapped into battles which they can not win, and enough of the enemy's weak spots to make their own strikes as safe and effective as possible. Conversely, the military authorities must gain enough information to find their foe and either to destroy him directly or to cut him off from the supplies and information which enable him to fight and live . . . The authorities must have accurate and prompt information of any significant concentrations and must be able to avoid them or to concentrate their own forces in turn and seize the rare opportunity of destroying a large group of rebels at once. Failure to obtain or act on such intelligence can be disastrous . . .
(pp. 32-3)

The quality and quantity of intelligence available to either guerrilla rebels or to the government depend directly on the relationship which the two sides enjoy with the population as a whole . . .
(p. 35)

Cross quotes Magsaysay in testimony to the value of bribery for obtaining intelligence and cites the "great success" of the authorities in the Philippines and Malaya when they offered generous rehabilitation programs and rewards to guerrillas for deserting and providing useful information. The fact generally was, however, that these devices were notably effective only after the tide had turned in favor of government forces, when counterguerrilla operations had begun to raise the pressure on the rebels, inflict casualties, work physical hardship, erode morale, and shake the conviction of ultimate victory.

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More generally, he argues that to the problem of finding the guerrilla in difficult, poorly known terrain the

solution . . . that still seems most effective is to employ natives of the region who are willing to work with the government and to use them as scouts and guides, or to organize them into units which are better able to preserve the peace than even the most efficient outsiders. (p. 30)

This, unfortunately, is not a universal solution. The British in Kenya had success with counter-gangs against the Mau Mau, and the Philippine security forces from time to time made effective use of anti-Huk indigenes. The French, however, tried this procedure with little or no success in Indochina, and the British in Cyprus and Palestine found "willing natives" simply unavailable as scouts, guides, or counterterrorist forces.

On urban insurrection, Cross aptly writes:

Probably the most effective instrument that a government can bring to bear . . . is an efficient police intelligence service . . .

Then he adds the truism:

If the leaders, the plans, and the methods of the rebellious movement are known to the authorities, the likelihood of its being able to mount major demonstrations or to strike serious blows is sharply reduced . . . (p. 51)

Turning to espionage, he makes the negative point that while all insurrectionists of course set up the most efficient intelligence nets they can, they usually make relatively little use of secret agents at the higher levels of government. This is because guerrilla leaders concentrate on collecting information for use in their own operations, rather than for the use of a foreign power.

It is tactical rather than strategic stuff they are after, and procurement of "national secrets" of the sort traditionally associated with major espionage is only incidental to the direct advancement of the rebellion. (p. 65)

The reader looks vainly for a few lines on the *counterguerrilla* forces' use of agents and informers—for a treatment of classical espionage. Yet clandestine operations, run by professional case officers, scored impressively in many counterinsurgency campaigns.

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On the uses of an air arm for intelligence, it is not enough merely to say:

Aerial photography . . . can help an army faced with [the difficulty of locating and pinning down elusive guerrilla forces.] (p. 35)

One wants a brief discussion of the uses and limitations of types of aircraft in obtaining essential information; there is documentary material on this.

Indeed, exposing himself to the charge of gross preoccupation with his own dodge, this intelligence officer regrets that such an otherwise good book does not clarify in more depth and detail the character and the special difficulties of intelligence operations in guerrilla warfare. It would of course be flagrantly parochial to expect a work like *Conflict in the Shadows* to take us on a grand detour through the bumpy field of intelligence. One may still yearn, however, for an expert study of the counterinsurgency intelligence function as revealed in the guerrilla wars of recent years.

An enormous American effort has gone into the creation and teaching of techniques and procedures for civic action and military operations. Great sums have been spent on the design, testing, and production of specialized combat and logistical gear. In contrast, little persistent attention has been given the development of sound doctrine and procedures for acquiring intelligence, the vital need for which has been stressed time and again by counterguerrilla force commanders. Even the research which would sum up the American intelligence experiences in Laos and South Vietnam remains to be done.

One wants to see sound conclusions, distilled from studies of success and of failure, on how the intelligence process in counterinsurgency can best be organized, directed, and controlled; on how responsibility for the various collection and analytical functions should be allocated among multiple security force elements; on ruses and deceptions; on working with the intelligence components of friendly foreign security forces; and on special training for intelligence personnel. Such an exercise might help to shorten the next counter-guerrilla action we get involved in.

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